



Testimony to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Presented by Mag Morelli, President of LeadingAge Connecticut

February 7, 2023

In Support of

House Bill 5438, An Act Establishing a Debt-Free State College Program for Employees of Day Care Facilities, Home Health Care Agencies and Nursing Homes

And

House Bill 5441, An Act Concerning College Graduates Who Work in the Fields of Education or Health Care in the State

Good afternoon, Senator Slap, Representative Haddad and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Mag Morelli, and I am the President of [LeadingAge Connecticut](#), a statewide membership association representing not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the continuum of aging services, including not-for-profit skilled nursing facilities, retirement communities, adult day centers and assisted living communities. I am pleased to be here to testify in support of two of the bills before you today, *House Bill 5438, An Act Establishing a Debt-Free State College Program for Employees of Day Care Facilities, Home Health Care Agencies and Nursing Homes*, and *House Bill 5441, An Act Concerning College Graduates Who Work in the Fields of Education or Health Care in the State*.

The members of LeadingAge Connecticut appreciate and strongly support this Committee's effort to develop initiatives aimed at addressing the state's health care workforce shortage by increasing the number of college trained health care professionals in the state. Addressing the workforce crisis is a priority for LeadingAge Connecticut and we are working together with a collaborative of other health care associations to find solutions as we are all struggling to hire from the same, limited pool of candidates. We know that there is no one silver bullet solution to solve this problem and that it will take a comprehensive, statewide, and multi-faceted approach to address the many facets of the problem. The proposals put forth in the bills before you today include a very important element of the solution and that is providing financial incentives and support for college students to pursue careers in health care and aging services. In fact, the financial assistance proposed in these bills could encourage and enable a person to pursue a college education in this field when they otherwise thought it might be unaffordable. Expanding the opportunity to enroll in these programs and making them affordable is a key aspect of our attached proposals to address the crisis.

We again thank the Committee for proposing these bills and for your efforts to address the workforce crisis in the health care and aging services field. The workforce crisis in aging services is real and requires action on many fronts. There is no single solution to these unprecedented workforce challenges, but if we work together, we can develop the wide range of solutions needed to ensure our older adults and their families can get the care and services they need.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Mag Morelli, President

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